UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.91/L.44
8 December 1997

ENGLISH ONLY

SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 13-22 January 1998
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SIXTH CONFERENCE

Report of Hungary on the standardization of geographical names, 1992-1997

Paper submitted by Hungary**

* E/CONF.91/1.

** Prepared by the Department of Lands and Mapping of the Ministry of Agriculture.

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The Committee on Geographical Names continues to act as an interdepartmental decision-making and advisory body operating in the Ministry of Agriculture. It advises on names of administrative nature, and decides the names of physical features and those connected with transport in general. Contrary to the trend of earlier decades when settlements were forcibly unified, splitups of unified communities kept busy the Committee in the last ten years.
The new act on surveying and mapping in Hungary reinforced the activity of the Committee as well.
Activities of the body also included decisions on a number of minor hydrographic names, and some cases of advice on minority names. A new comprehensive Hungarian orthographic guidelines for geographical names has also been worked out.
The toponymic guidelines /Hungary/ for map and other editors has been prepared as a working document for the 17th Session of UNGEGN (1994).
Work is continuing on the computerized database to include eventually all verified names contained by the 1:10,000 topographic series.
Exonyms have also often featured on the agenda of the Committee. There seemed to be a general agreement that Hungarian names in neighbouring countries with a large share of local Hungarian minority population should be retained, despite being classified as exonyms by UN definition. Some views would like to include much more names in this group. It was agreed that the opinion of the respective Hungarian minorities should be included in any decisions.
The list of country names is updated whenever needed based on relevant UN materials.

Ad Agenda Item 5. (National Standardization)

Resolution No. 4 of the 1st UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names serves as basis for the organizational and practical matters of national standardization in Hungary.

Under Gov. Decree No. 71/1989 the Committee on Geographical Names acts as an interministerial decision-making and advisory body operating in the Ministry of Agriculture (Address: Committee on Geographical Names, Ministry of Agriculture, Budapest 55, P.O. Box 1, H-1860 Hungary). It discussed several suggestions for new commune names in this period, as the Committee is responsible for giving advice on administrative names before decisions are taken. In fact it has the same responsibilities in this respect as had had the former Hungarian Commission on Place Names following its establishment in 1898. This former body, operating until 1954, already acted under the principles of avoiding homonyms, and correcting obsolete spelling according to the current orthography.

Decision has also been made on some orthographical questions of commune names pertaining to diacritical marks, on various hydrographic names (e.g. on the large reservoir on the River Tisza at Kisköre, which is now called 'Tisza-tó') and on several new railway stations.

The updated guidelines for the orthography of geographical names for speakers of the Hungarian language has been prepared for publication.

On the new Act on Surveying and Mapping

A new law on surveying and mapping (Act No. LXXVI/1996) is effective of 1 March, 1997. It is the first time that a highest level regulation contains statements on geographical names as follows:

- the establishment and recording of official geographical names, as well as supplying data from the records constitutes a fundamental task of the State,

- the above mentioned task is carried out by operating the Committee on Geographical Names,

- official geographical names established under separate regulations should be used in the basic official (state) mapping,

Procedures and principles

The Committee devoted an entire meeting to the question of the procedures for the approval of official geographical names. A number of new elements have been discussed in addition to the present regulations, including the rendering of minority geographical names, names of the inhabited parts of towns and cities. In this respect it was agreed that a close cooperation is needed between authorities responsible for mapping, statistics, and population records, as all three branches are interested in keeping records for these types of names.

Treatment of Names in Multilingual Areas

Minorities represent some 6 % of the population of the country. Of them 4-5 % belong to the Roma (gipsy) group, while the rest are mainly Germans, Slovaks and Romanians.
The Committee also gives advice on nationality town and settlement names on request. One example was the case of the settlement of Murakeresztúr, whose Croatian name was requested to be changed from the previous Murski Krstur. The name 'Kerestur', based on the present use and traditions of the local Croatian inhabitants, was supported by the Committee.
Topographic and other large scale maps contain minority language geographical names written in the Hungarian alphabet.
The 1993 Act on the national and ethnic minorities allows for broader rights concerning the preservation of their culture, traditions and use of language. The act spurred activities to transform these minority names into the respective orthographies.

Toponymic Guidelines:

The 2nd edition of the Toponymic Guidelines for Hungary was presented to the participants of the 12th Session of the Division (Sept. 1993), as well as to the 17th Session of UNGEGN (June, 1994, New York). It informs on the languages used in Hungary, the names authorities and name standardization, the source materials, contains the glossary of generic terms, designations and attributes of geographical character, as well as the abbreviations used on official Hungarian maps.

Ad Agenda Item 6. (Toponymic data files)

The Database of Geographical Names (FNT) of the Institute of Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (FÖMI) contains some 78,500 records of the previously prepared Gazetteers I. and II. of Hungary (see below). The database is being expanded to include names of the 1:10,000 topographic series of Hungary. Presently this part of the database holds about 20,000

records. This work is expected to go on for about another 10 years as names are undergoing a time-comsuming verifying procedure. The database is also planned to be transformed into a relational database to enable it for information connection with the future 1:10,000 digital national topographic series.

The Gazetteer of Hungary I. (Magyarország Földrajzinév-tára I., Budapest, 1983), contains the major physical features of the country. The Gazetteer of Hungary II. (19 volumes published in 1979-1981) includes names of all settlements, including many of the smallest ones (farmsteads), a great number of traditional names of small territorial units of cultivated fields ("dűlő"), as well as physical features. The latest printed national gazetteer containing all types of administrative names was published by the Central Satistical Office of Hungary at the end of 1995. (A Magyar Köztársaság Helységnévtára, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest, 1995.)

Ad Agenda Item 10. (Exonyms)

The Committee also dealt with the question of exonyms of inhabited places in countries neighbouring Hungary. It was stated that according to the present regulations there are no means, and at the same time, there is no need to make compulsory decisions on exonyms. The discussion revealed the existence of different types of exonyms with almost forgotten historical exonyms on the one side, and pseudo exonyms, in fact endonyms, that are used by the present Hungarian population, on the other side. According to one opinion all place names have to be recommended for map use that are included in the 1913 place name gazetteer of historical Hungary. Another opinion suggested to recommend only place names that are used by the present Hungarian population together with those having a traditional background still alive. Without making any decision it was agreed that any recommendation has to be based on opinions of the respective Hungarian minorities.

Ad Agenda Item 12. (Writing systems)

A decision was made in this period on the map use of the Pinyin for the transcription of Chinese geographical names. As a consequence, more and more maps and atlases in Hungary now use this system, in some cases together with the traditional Hungarian transcription.
Transcription of geographical names of several newly independent states of the former Soviet Union continue to pose difficulties due to the shortage of information. Some countries suggest direct romanization from their scripts, but a few of them still follow the method of transcribing through the use of Cyrillic alphabet.

Ad Agenda Item 16. (Country Names)

The Committee regularly updates its list of country names, containing both short and long forms, suggested for use in Hungary. Base materials for its decisions include the UN Terminology Bulletin No. 347 (Country Names), and relevant materials of UNGEGN like the really valuable Working Paper No 98. of its 18th Session, Geneva, August, 1996.

prepared by

Ervin Földi and
Béla Pokoly

Budapest, October 1997